What is ELSA?

There will always be children and young people in schools facing life challenges that detract from their ability to engage with learning, and some will require greater support to increase their emotional literacy than others. ELSA is an initiative developed and supported by educational psychologists. It recognises that children learn better and are happier in school if their emotional needs are also addressed.

We are lucky enough to have our own qualified Emotional Literacy Support Assistant at Gorsewood – Mrs Williams. She has been trained by Educational Psychologists and has regular supervision sessions with them, and is to gain advice on the suitability or nature of ELSA involvement in complex cases. Mrs William’s plans and delivers programmes of support to pupils who are experiencing temporary or longer term additional emotional needs.

The majority of ELSA work is delivered on an individual basis, but sometimes small group work is more appropriate, especially in the areas of social and friendship skills. Sessions are fun, we use a range of activities such as: games, role-play with puppets or arts and craft.  ELSA sessions take place in our very own 'ELSA room' which provides a calm, safe space for the child to feel supported and nurtured.

**In ELSA we aim to provide support for a wide range of emotional needs:**

Anger management
    Loss and bereavement Recognising emotions
    Self-esteem
    Social skills
    Friendship skills

**How does ELSA work?**

Children are usually referred for ELSA support by their class teacher. Every half term there is a meeting with our pastoral team to discuss the referral forms and to identify and prioritise which children require a programme. With the programme aims in mind Mrs Williams then plans support to develop new skills and coping strategies that allow the child to manage social and emotional demands more effectively.

Each session lasts from 30 - 45 minutes once a week for 6-8 weeks.

**Supporting - not fixing**

Remember, ELSAs are not there to fix children's problems. What we can do is provide emotional support.

We aim to establish a warm, respectful relationship with a pupil and to provide a reflective space where they are able to share honestly their thoughts and feelings.

It needs to be appreciated that change cannot necessarily be achieved rapidly and is dependent upon the context and complexity of the presenting issues. Some children may complete more than one 6-8 week ELSA intervention. This could be due to the fact that they will benefit from focusing on more than one target. For children with complex or long-term needs it is unrealistic to expect ELSA intervention to resolve all their difficulties, however support will be designed to target specific aspects of a child's need. Mrs Williams works closely with the SENDCo, Mrs Westwood, to monitor the child’s progress.



**So what do the children think?!**

On completion of their ELSA programmes, we ask the children to reflect on their experiences and to give us some feedback. Here are some of the lovely comments we receive:

**"I like coming to ELSA, it makes me happy!"**

 **"The ELSA time has helped me to know how to make new friends".**

 **"ELSA has helped me feel confident".**

 **"It has helped me a lot with my anger and my problems in the playground and in the class. I can relax more now and calm down quicker!”**

**"I like doing the different types of mindfulness, they help me to relax. I do them at home now too!"**

**"ELSA has helped me to be more sensible in class".**

**If you have any concerns about your child’s emotional wellbeing, please speak to Mrs Williams who is always happy to discuss them with you.**